

**NECESSARY SUPPLEMENTAL ACCOMMODATION (NSA)**

**Purpose:** To provide staff with basic information about Community Service Office responsibilities in the identification of clients who need supplemental accommodation services. NSA is intended to assure that clients who face limitations in their abilities have and can maintain access to department programs and services

Effective June 1, 2001

**WAC 388-472-0010 What are necessary supplemental accommodation services?**

Necessary supplemental accommodation (NSA) services are services provided to you if you have a mental, neurological, physical or sensory impairment or other problems that prevent you from getting program benefits in the same way that an unimpaired person would get them.

NSA services include but are not limited to:

- (1) Arranging for or providing help to complete and submit forms to us;
- (2) Helping you give or get the information we need to decide or continue eligibility;
- (3) Helping you request continuing benefits;
- (4) If you miss an appointment or deadline, contacting you about the reason before we reduce or end your benefits;
- (5) Explaining to you the reduction in or ending of your benefits (see WAC 388-418-0020);
- (6) If we know you have a person who helps you with your applications, notifying them when we need information or when we are about to reduce or end your benefits;
- (7) Assisting you with requests for fair hearings;
- (8) Providing protective payments if needed, according to WAC 388-265-1250; and
- (9) On request, reviewing our decision to terminate, suspend or reduce your

benefits.

Effective June 1, 2001

**WAC 388-472-0020 How does the department decide if I am eligible for NSA services?**

When you, as head of household, apply for benefits either in person or by phone, we screen you to decide if you meet NSA requirements. We explain NSA services to you during the screening.

- (1) We identify you as NSA if you:
  - (a) Say you need NSA services in order to have equal access to our programs and services;
  - (b) Have or claim to have a mental impairment;
  - (c) Have a developmental disability;
  - (d) Are disabled by alcohol or drug addiction;
  - (e) Are unable to read or write in any language; or
  - (f) Are a minor not residing with your parents.
- (2) We identify you as NSA if we observe you to have cognitive limitations, whether or not you have a disability, which may prevent you from understanding the nature of NSA services or affect your ability to access our programs. Cognitive limitations are limitations in your ability to communicate, understand, remember, process information, exercise judgement and make decisions, perform routine tasks or relate appropriately with others.

Effective June 1, 2001

**WAC 388-472-0030 How can I get NSA services?**

- (1) After we screen you for NSA eligibility and initially identify your case as NSA, we mark your case file with a uniform NSA identifier.
- (2) After you are initially identified as NSA, we complete an assessment to confirm your NSA designation.

- (3) If the assessment confirms your NSA designation, we develop an accommodation plan that specifies the services we will provide to you to improve your access to our programs and services.
- (4) If you are designated as NSA according to WAC 388-472-0020(1)&(2), we include all the NSA services listed in WAC 388-472-0010 in your accommodation plan.
- (5) Based on your request or a change in your needs, the NSA designation and the accommodation plan may be assessed and changed.
- (6) Even if you are eligible to receive NSA services you may refuse NSA services.

Effective June 1, 2001

**WAC 388-472-0040 What are the department's responsibilities in giving NSA services to me?**

- (1) All of our staff are continually responsible to identify you as possibly NSA eligible and assist you with NSA services.
- (2) We provide a grace period to continue your financial, food or medical assistance when:
  - (a) We stop a benefit because we are unable to tell if you continue to qualify; and
  - (b) You provide proof you still qualify for the benefit within the twenty days right after the benefit stops. We restore lost benefits as follows:
    - (i) We reopen your medical assistance from the first of the month; and
    - (ii) We recalculate your cash and food assistance and issue you the correct amount without taking away any benefits as long as you were eligible to receive them.

Effective June 1, 2001

**WAC 388-472-0050 What if I don't accept or follow through with program requirements because I'm not able to or I don't understand them?**

- (1) We consider how your limitation or impairment affects your ability to accept and follow through on all program requirements. This can include, but is not limited to, your actions in failing to:
  - (a) Follow through with medical treatment;

- (b) Follow through with referrals to other agencies;
  - (c) Provide timely income reports;
  - (d) Maintain employment;
  - (e) Participate in food assistance employment and training; or
  - (f) Participate in the WorkFirst program.
- (2) If we decide your limitation was the cause of your refusal to accept or failure to follow through on these requirements, we will find that you have good cause and we will not take any adverse action.
- (3) Following a finding of good cause not to have followed through with the requirement, we will review your accommodation plan to assure that all services necessary to enable you to meet the program requirements are being provided to you.
- (4) If we are unable to accommodate your condition so that you are able to participate in program requirements, we will waive program requirements.
- (5) If participation in program requirements is not waived, you must cooperate with program requirements.

### CLARIFYING INFORMATION

1. The department has a responsibility to explain NSA services, screen CSO clients, and make NSA services available to clients. These services are always delivered at the CSO and each CSO creates its own procedures for NSA screening and service delivery. Follow local CSO procedures when delivering NSA services.
2. NSA procedures do not change eligibility requirements. The client still needs to provide all verifications and meet eligibility requirements.
  - a. Clients who qualify for NSA services are outlined in WAC 388-472-0020.

- b. Screening responsibilities are defined by CSO procedure and can be completed by reception, financial, or social service staff.
  - c. NSA services are discussed in WAC 388-472-0010.
- 3. A client has the right to self-identify as NSA at any time. Use the assessment to confirm or deny NSA status.
- 4. A client with limitations in communication, decision-making, routine tasks or relationships must be assessed to confirm NSA needs.
- 5. When a NSA client works with an advocate, try to involve the advocate as much as possible.
- 6. Limit NSA accommodation to what is minimally necessary to overcome barriers
  - a. to receiving department service.
- 7. All clients have the right to decline NSA designation and services.
- 8. Currently HCS clients are presumed to be NSA. NSA Accommodation Plans are documented in HCS case files. HCS completes all ACES/NSA identification and Accommodation Plans processes prior to transfer to the CSO. For clients that require services not identified on the DSHS 14-415(X), document those services in ACES.
- 9. Clients sending in applications by mail are not screened or determined for NSA. However, when an applicant communicates a need for accommodation, indicate the client requires NSA services and complete the NSA Plan using the accommodation identified by the client.

## **WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1. Follow local CSO procedures when delivering NSA services:
- 2. Explain NSA services and screen all new clients for NSA needs. Document in ACES that NSA services have been explained.
- 3. Identify all individuals who appear to meet NSA criteria.
- 4. Use the NSA Assessment and Accommodation Plan screens in ACES to confirm the NSA designation and prepare the Accommodation Plan.

5. Mark all cases identified as NSA. If a client declines NSA designation or services, document that in the file.
6. Notify social services if the Accommodation Plan fails to give the client satisfactory access to programs or services.
7. Social Workers have the ability to access and update NSA Accommodation Plans using the ACES system. For processing instructions see the ACES instructions for in the ACES on-line manual. ([link here](#))
8. Reassess the NSA needs of clients whenever their circumstances change or they request it.
9. WAC 388-472-0040 provides information on stopping and continuing benefits for NSA clients. Use the barcode program to identify NSA clients terminated during the month. If the client produces the needed factors of eligibility within 20 days following the month of adverse action, reinstate benefits without prorating. For food assistance, reopen as closed in error rather than reinstating food assistance benefits.